



UPDATE

Spring/Summer 2001



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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Thinking about the recreational opportunities of Long Island Sound isn't an abstract topic for me. I need to think no further back than last weekend when friends from college were visiting with their kids on the first hot, hazy Saturday of summer. Now we could have parked ourselves in the backyard and set the kids loose. They would have been satisfied with a forgettable day bouncing about a grassy yard in Anywhere, USA. But this is SUMMER and, with Long Island Sound only 15 minutes from our house, we were going to the beach, a public beach. It was a great day. Boats were motoring out of the nearby harbor. On an adjacent jetty, a small group fished for stripers and bluefish. There was a good crowd at the beach, filling the air with the comforting buzz of children playing, punctuated by an occasional lifeguard whistle. And even as the temperature climbed above 90 degrees, the water remained refreshingly cool and inviting.

It was also alive. Blue mussels were piled onto the rocks offshore, gulls were always nearby, and the incoming tide brought snails and hermit crabs to the shoreline to be scooped up, collected, and studied by the kids playing there. Last year, a horseshoe crab mistook this busy beach at mid-day for a good spot to deposit her eggs. Lifted out of the water by a brave child, the crab instantly became a curio, surrounded by inquisitive kids. Try to replicate that at a chlorinated, antiseptic pool. No, the beach is more than a way to cool off. It's one of the most direct ways that we connect with the outdoors and the sensations of summer. At the beach, we literally immerse ourselves in nature and the unique experience of our environment. That

is a sensation that can't be replicated at a generic pool or backyard. It's part of what makes Long Island Sound an enormously valued resource and our experiences of it valued memories.

You don't like going to the beach? Well how about sailing, boating, fishing, or diving. Long Island Sound offers great opportunities to enjoy each of these activities as some of the other articles in this issue of the *UPDATE* demonstrate. While I've emphasized the psychic pleasures of the Sound, there are monetary benefits as well. Dr. Marilyn Altobello's 1990 study of the economic value of Long Island Sound showed that these water-quality based activities generated more than \$5 billion dollars of direct and indirect economic activity in the region. The figure is surely more now.

Of course, I never completely relaxed that day at the beach. I had to pick up food wrappers and beverage containers carelessly left on the beach by departing bathers. I thought about how we need to do more to restore Long Island Sound and increase public access to justify that investment. But I also cringed when I overheard a bather mistake the Sound's typically greenish brown coloration for dirty water. We need to remind each other of how much progress has been made and overcome the misconceptions that some have about Long Island Sound. What a loss it would be for them and for the region to turn our back to the Sound and not reclaim and enjoy this great resource. The key to undertaking any great challenge is to have fun along the way.

Mark Tedesco

CAC CORNER

by John Atkin

Nearly one year ago, the Policy Committee of the Long Island Sound Study (LISS) met and approved a process to create a Long Island Sound 2001 Agreement to be signed by the governors of Connecticut and New York and the EPA administrator. The original *Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan* (CCMP) was endorsed by then Governors Lowell P. Weicker Jr. (CT) (it was actually signed by former Lieutenant Governor Eunice Groark) and Mario Cuomo (NY), along with former EPA Administrator Carol Browner. The concepts of the original Plan were reaffirmed by Governors John Rowland (CT) and George Pataki (NY) in 1996, who added detail and prioritization to the commitments.

The Policy Committee last year saw a new Long Island Sound Agreement as an opportunity to concisely spell out quantifiable targets and time frames for the continued implementation of the CCMP. Tremendous work on the CCMP has been done by the states of Connecticut and New York, the EPA, other federal and state agencies, and citizens. By placing numerical targets in a document, signed by the governors of the two states and the EPA administrator, the priorities become clear, and the incentive to complete the goals increases.

The Agreement should set a vision, as similar Agreements signed by the governors in the Chesapeake Bay and the Great Lakes regions have done. It will link the monitoring and research that already occurs in the Sound, and in the harbors, to specific environmental goals and results. An Agreement would maintain the momentum of the CCMP's implementation, and would also address emerging issues.

Subject areas discussed in the Policy Committee's request for an Agreement include the concept of developing a Long Island Sound Reserve, addressing the issues of living marine resources in the Sound, watershed protection, and the needs of research and monitoring. This is a critical document for the future of the Sound, and I urge the Governors' signatures, as well as the EPA's this fall. It will keep the momentum going, as well as providing incentives for even more momentum as specific dates and targets are set.

John Atkin is the Connecticut co-chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee and is the president of Save the Sound, Inc. in Stamford, CT, and Glen Cove, NY.

Save the Date

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for September 13, 2001 at Pfizer in Manhattan. Call the EPA Long Island Sound Office at (203)977-1541 or check the LISS web site www.epa.gov/region01/eco/lis/calendar.htm for the schedule of 2001 CAC meetings.

Diving Long Island Sound

by Rick D'Amico

Although most people don't normally associate Long Island Sound with scuba diving, the fact is that there are some tremendous opportunities for diving in its waters. Most skeptics would be amazed at how much there is to see in the Sound. One can see pink hydroids, frilly sea anemones, red and yellow sponges, and plentiful schools of fish along the rocky reefs. From shoreline diving to shipwrecks in over 100 feet of water, the Sound offers underwater exploration for every level of skill.

My favorite site in the Sound is **Greens Ledge Lighthouse**, off Rowayton, CT. The horseshoe-shaped rubble island on which the lighthouse was built provides a haven for many different types of crustaceans and fish, and it's an easy dive to make from a boat. It is a shallow dive with depths ranging from 15 to 20 feet.

One of the more recent shipwrecks to dive in the Sound is the tugboat **Celtic**. It sank on the night of November 17, 1984, off Norwalk, CT. The **Celtic** was pushing a barge full of scrap metal from Bridgeport, CT to New Jersey. When the barge took on water and quickly sank, it took the **Celtic** with it. Today, both ships rest in approximately 65 feet of water, 1.5 miles south of Sheffield Island.

The shipwreck that was the worst nautical disaster in the history of Long Island Sound is off Port Jefferson, NY. The **Lexington**, which was owned by Cornelius Vanderbilt, sank during January of 1840. More than 100 lives were lost, either from the flames that consumed the wooden paddlewheel boat, or from exposure to the bitterly cold water. An attempt to salvage the **Lexington**, with her cargo of silver, only resulted in the hull being broken into sections. The main section of the ship (with the remnants of the paddlewheel) is in approximately 95 feet of water, and is below the usual route of the Bridgeport-Port Jefferson Ferry. The wreck doesn't have a high profile, since it burned to the waterline,

Continued on page 3.

Boating Long Island Sound

by Grant W. Westerson

Long Island Sound is Connecticut's and New York's most valuable common asset, one of the leading reasons we enjoyed the industrial revolution, and the major cause of more than 400 years of a rich, maritime heritage. It's a highway for ship-born goods and heating oil, home to new high-speed ferries, and a recreational playground and fishing resource for the East Coast.

This great treasure needs to be managed, protected, and understood so it can be a long-lasting source of use and relaxation for many people for years to come. We have to manage what goes into the Sound. All our major recreational rivers bring more than just people; they bring silt and other debris, some of it carrying with it contaminants from past discharges. This becomes a serious issue for navigation and maritime safety. If channels and harbors are not managed for modern traffic, the economic loss to both Connecticut and New York can be significant. If deep draft fuel and cargo ships can no longer navigate the Sound, commodity prices will spiral upward as cargos are offloaded to many smaller ships. This multiple cargo handling also increases the chance of a catastrophic spill.

We have done a great job minimizing the influx of damaging materials like nitrogen, metals, and other more insidious toxic contaminants. We are addressing the outfall from treatment plants and planning actions to take care of other regional polluters. These courses of action have all contributed to the improved water quality that enhances the boating experience and must be maintained with diligence. Focusing on these issues is important but it is just as important to be responsive to all groups that vie for the

rights to use this great asset.

Many divergent activities go on at the same time in the Sound, with many of them dependent on the boating industry. That's why it's such a great resource to so many. It can and will be shared, but we must not fail to recognize the nature of the Sound to adapt itself



Port Niantic Marina

to change as it has for tens of thousands of years. We also live in an age where it is no longer convenient or easy to move the location of our waterfront villages and ports when the Sound changes, as the ancient Native Americans did. The whole socioeconomic community linked to Long Island Sound must together find solutions for removing sediment that would naturally close and change the channels and embayments essential to vessel access to the Sound.

What does the Sound have to offer? A snapshot of activities around the Sound at any given time can include annual and weekly sailboat races from the East River to Watch Hill, daytime and supper cruises to nowhere, fishing,

fishing, and more fishing. People can be seen cruising to a favorite getaway harbor, enjoying some of the best restaurants with a view, or taking a trip on one of the cross sound or high speed ferries. And then there's beaching, sunning, loafing, picnicking, wading, crabbing, birding, shelling, or just sitting

watching the boats cruise by. These activities are what make lifetime memories. What's so hard to take?

Long Island Sound offers an endless variety of experiences, and there's something for everyone. For those interested in revisiting history, there's the freedom schooner AMISTAD, built in our own Mystic Seaport. Watching the fishing fleets in eastern Long Island Sound may

spark memories of their appearance as backdrops on the large and small silver screen. And a visit to Groton provides a peek at the important role submarines have played in our nation's defense.

Long Island Sound is a luxury for those of us lucky enough to live nearby. We have recreational and business opportunities that many people are unaware of, but we are also charged with a responsibility to take care of this asset and keep it the treasure it is for many years and many generations to come.

Grant W. Westerson is the Executive Director for Connecticut Marine Trades Association.

Continued from page 2.

as evidenced by the charred wooden hull that remains.

An excellent shipwreck for beginning divers on the Long Island side of the Sound is the **Glen Island**. It is in 15-20 feet of water, approximately 800 feet off Matinecock Point. Some timbers and the ship's boiler remain intact, although most of the wreck is debris spread over approximately 1/3 acre of sea bottom. The **Glen Island** sank in 1904.

These are just a few of the many attractions for divers who want to explore the Sound. It offers something for every diver.

Rick D'Amico works for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and has been diving Long Island Sound for more than 30 years.

A Place Where We Dig Holes in the Ground

by Mark Parker

The eastern woodland Indians, known as the Hammonasset, once lived along the Long Island Sound coast where the towns of Clinton and Madison, CT exist today. The Indian word “Hammonasset” means “where we dig holes in the ground”, and refers to the place where they farmed along the Hammonasset River and tidal marsh areas in Clinton Harbor. Today this area is one of the crown jewels in the State of Connecticut Parks system, Hammonasset Beach State Park.

Hammonasset has a rich geological and social history. The first European colonists arrived in 1639 and the land exchanged hands between colonists and Native Americans frequently thereafter. The first structure on Hammonasset Beach was a farmhouse built in 1828 that now houses the Meigs Point Nature Center.

The Connecticut State Park and Forest Commission was created in 1913 for the purpose of acquiring land to be put aside for public parks and forested land. The Commission began considering probable sites for a park system with Hammonasset being one of them. The 1914 plan for Hammonasset was to acquire the land from Tom's Creek to the Hammonasset River. But it wasn't until 1919 that the Connecticut Park and Forest Commission began to buy property to create Hammonasset Beach State Park, and by the end of the year, the Park totaled 565 acres. On July 18, 1920 the park opened to the public for the first time.

During the three-month season that ended on Labor Day some 75,164 visitors were counted. The next year,

on May 30th the park again opened and by the end of September (four months) 167,622 people had visited the park. The numbers have continued to grow, and today over one million are visiting the park annually.

Of all the Connecticut coastal State Parks, Hammonasset Beach State Park has the largest beach frontage (2 1/4 miles), attracts the most visitors (about 1.5 million annually), and provides the most campsites (560). The Park covers over 919 acres of land, 45% of which



is tidal marsh. The foremost reason people come to the Park is the swimming. The beaches were created by surf erosion. The pebbly east section was created from bouldery glacial till. The west beach is composed of sandy outwash, with a bottom that falls away very gently, allowing people to wade and splash. There are virtually no waves, just mellow breaking or small swells

on the shore, so if you're looking for surf you will be disappointed. Two jetties define the west beach area and

provide good fishing spots. Another striking attraction in the Park is a rocky peninsula known as Meigs Point. An observation platform has been constructed here that provides striking views of Long Island Sound, the surrounding salt marsh, and Clinton Harbor. If you forget your binoculars, there are deck mounted viewers available (bring quarters).

The Park also boasts over 6,700 feet of bike trails, hiking trails, park roads, bird watching areas, a carry-on boat access area, and a 3/4-mile boardwalk (including 2,100 feet of new recycled plastic planking to improve resistance to weathering). The parking fee for weekdays is \$5.00 for CT residents and \$8.00 for nonresidents and on weekends is \$7.00 for residents and \$12.00 for nonresidents. Campsites are \$12.00 per night. The campground fee includes access to all Park facilities. Campsite reservations may be made calling 1-877-668-CAMP (2267), 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday & Sunday or www.reserveamerica.com/camping.

Mark Parker works for Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and is the Connecticut



Public Outreach Coordinator for the Long Island Sound Study.

Something for Everyone in State Parks Along Long Island Sound in New York

by Gary Lawton

The joyful chatter of children's voices as they splash in the water, the aroma of hot charcoal wafting in the air, the quiet contemplation of the beauty of tall bluffs encountering the water's edge, the excitement of students searching for life in salt marshes and along the shore. These are some of the experiences more than 2.5 million people encounter when they visit the State Parks along Long Island Sound in New York.

Wildwood State Park in Wading River is a popular place for campers with accommodations for tent camping and full hook-up trailer sites in the shade of a hardwood forest. Thirteen miles of hiking trails provide many chances to view wildlife in a natural setting. Its two-mile beach has a bathing area and offers excellent fishing opportunities.

At Governor Alfred E. Smith, Sunken Meadow State Park in Kings Park, people come to picnic, play golf, or relax on the beach. Even during the winter months, many people exercise on the 3/4 mile long boardwalk. The golf course is in the process of becoming a certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary. This park is also host to the BOCES-SCOPE Outdoor Learning Lab where hundreds of students come each year to study the ecology of Long Island Sound.

For more passive forms of recreation, including bird watching, hiking, nature programs, and photography, many people come to Caumsett State Park in Huntington. Anglers who fish for stripers, blues, and weakfish are reporting that this is a great year for the sport. Students

come to the Park to study the shore and marshes of this facility. Caumsett is one of the most significant nesting sites for federally threatened piping plovers and state threatened least terns.

Caleb Smith State Park Preserve in Smithtown is located along the Nissequogue River that flows north into Long Island Sound. The preserve is well known for its excellent fly fishing for trout and interpretive programs for schools, youth organizations, and the general public. The BOCES-SCOPE Outdoor Learning Lab also provides educational opportunities for local schools. The old Clubhouse houses exhibits and self-guided nature trails offer opportunities for people to discover the natural history of the Nissequogue River.



Nissequogue River State Park
canoe and kayak launch

In November of 1999, New York State Governor George E. Pataki announced a new State Park - Nissequogue River State Park, which was part of the former Kings Park Psychiatric Center. Totaling 153 acres, the Park includes the water front portion of the property along the Nissequogue River leading into Long Island Sound. Some of the Park was designated a Bird Conservation Area

due to its value to migratory birds, wintering waterfowl, and concentration of wading birds, including herons and egrets. A recently opened canoe and kayak launch provides access to the river and the Sound. Interpretive programs have been established and the Long Island Greenbelt Trail wanders through the Park providing opportunities for scenic vistas.

Another new facility located at the northern end of the Nassau/Suffolk Greenbelt Trail is the 40-acre Cold Spring Harbor State Park. The Cold Spring Harbor Library will be built in this area and will have an environmental library with rest rooms for hikers. An Environmental Education Center is also planned here.

Whether you are interested in taking a hike through pristine woodlands, enjoying a family picnic, camping in a woodland area, or swimming in cool waters, the State Parks along Long Island Sound provide recreational opportunities for everyone. For more information about these and other New York State Parks visit our web site www.nysparks.state.ny.us.

Gary Lawton is the Regional Environmental Educator for New York State Parks.



Nissequogue River

Fishing Opportunities in Long Island Sound

by Pat Augustine

FISH ON - A familiar cry heard around the Sound!

This year has been exceptional for all user groups that fish the waters of Long Island Sound, from the west to the eastern extremities, including world famous, Montauk Point, well known for the spectacular runs of striped bass.

Our most sought-after species including fluke (summer flounder), striped bass, bluefish, weakfish, followed by blackfish (tautog), porgies, and black sea bass have made very solid showings this year. Baitfish, such as menhaden, silversides, and sand eels showings have started out slowly and have increased in significant numbers. Certain areas of the Sound historically continue to be problematic in holding baitfish or sport fish due to a variety of causes that the Long Island Sound Study is addressing.

FISH POPULATIONS/DYNAMICS

The growing marine fish populations in the Sound, in great part, are the result of management efforts by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). The ASMFC is responsible for managing some 23 species of marine fish, shellfish, and crustaceans.

Working with a species "fishery management plan", and with the help of nature, the most sought after fish have

rebounded to former quantity levels. The most prominent of that group is striped bass, followed closely by fluke, and bluefish. Weakfish have made an exceptional showing this year with anticipation that the stock will continue to expand. During the remainder of the summer, anglers will also be fishing for porgies and black sea bass. These species are very abundant as their populations continue to grow.

REMEMBER - IT IS CALLED FISHING NOT CATCHING!

Often we need to be reminded that not all anglers catch fish. Some folks are very adept at it, while others can't seem to catch a fish no matter how hard they try. That's why it's called fishing. For those that aren't catching fish, what is important is the quality of time spent in the endeavor, the ambiance of the moment, the interaction with others sharing the experience, and the enjoyment of the beauty and wonder of the natural surroundings.

The tables below include the 2001 rules and regulations for a few recreational fisheries. Updated rules and regulations can be obtained by calling either the Connecticut or New York Marine Fisheries Offices or visiting their web sites.

Pat Augustine is Executive Director for New York State Sportfishing Federation and Governor Pataki's Appointee for the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Species	Size Limit (inches)	Daily Possession Limit	Open Season
Summer Flounder (Fluke)	17	7	May 2-October 31
Tautog (Blackfish)	14	1 fish from June 1 to Oct 6 10 fish from Oct 7 to May 31	All Year
Bluefish (including snappers)	none	10	All year
Striped Bass (marine waters)	28	1	May 8 to Dec 15
Black Sea Bass	11	25	May 10 to Feb 28
Scup (Porgy)	9	50	July 1 to Nov 17

For the complete list of regulations or updates please contact the regulations hotline (800)734-7332 or visit the web site www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dfwmr/marine/swflaws.htm

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection

Species	Size Limit (inches)	Daily Possession Limit	Open Season
Summer Flounder (Fluke)	17	6	All Year
Tautog (Blackfish)	14	4	June 15-April 30
Bluefish (including snappers)	none	10	All year
Striped Bass (marine waters)	24-32 41 or larger	1 fish in each size	All Year fishing from shore or private vessel
Black Sea Bass	11	25	May 10 to Feb 28
Scup (Porgy)	9	25	June 3 to Oct 23

For the complete list of regulations or updates please contact the regulations number (860)434-6043 or visit the web site dep.state.ct.us/burnatr/fishing/marineinfo/saltregs.htm

Dredging Update

Progress Slows

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being developed by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region I and II, and the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) New England and New York Districts. An EIS is a document that assesses the potential environmental impact of a proposed action. In this case the proposed action is the designation of one or more disposal sites in Long Island Sound for dredged material.

During this EIS process, the EPA and the ACE will continue to solicit public involvement on issues. To date there have been a series of informational meetings and workshops. The most recent meeting, attended by members of the EIS Long Island Sound workgroup, was held in Old Lyme, CT, on April 26, 2001. This full-day meeting consisted of presentations by EPA and the ACE with discussion and open dialogue. The topics for discussion were a field work summary, fisheries resources and fishing activities, potential upland alternative disposal sites, GIS database, dredging needs, and economic analyses.

The field work summary included a presentation on the sediment chemistry, benthic community sampling, tissue chemistry (benthic, lobster, and finfish), sediment mapping, and physical oceanographic data. An overview of the fisheries resources included data collected from resource agencies, and an update on the interviews and surveys conducted on fishing activities in the Sound. The draft report on upland alternative disposal sites was presented with discussion. The GIS presentation was an overview of what has been

gathered to date and what new data is to be acquired. The dredging needs update was a presentation on the list of marine facilities, the questionnaire to be sent to the facilities, and schedule. The economic analyses presentation reviewed the approach that will be taken in looking at the impact dredging has on the economy.

The contractor for this EIS will complete its work on fisheries resources and activities, dredging needs, economic analyses, GIS, upland summary, and other tasks by this fall. Reports will be placed on the web at that time.

Funding for the year 2001 has been exhausted with completion of the contractor work as stated above. The funding for 2002 will cover tissue analyses only. No funding currently exists for this project after 2002.

Information on this project can be found at the web site www.epa.gov/region01/eco/lisdreg/. This web site will be updated as information becomes available.

If you would like to be placed on the Long Island Sound Environmental Impact Statement mailing list, give comment, or would like more information please contact:

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If you would like to be placed on the mailing list or make changes to your address please contact the NY LIS Office.

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www.epa.gov/region01/eco/lis

Long Island Sound Study Supporting Agencies:



US EPA
www.epa.gov



CT DEP

dep.state.ct.us



NYS DEC

www.dec.state.ny.us

Sound Health 2001 Available on the web

Is Long Island Sound getting cleaner? Is the water safe to swim in? Are the fish and shellfish safe to eat? The answers to these and other critical questions on the health of the Sound and its habitats are available at www.epa.gov/region01/eco/lis.

\$5,000 Grants Available

The Long Island Sound Study just released the Request For Proposal for the Public Participation Information and Education Small Grants Program. Proposal deadline, postmarked by September 28. Grants are awarded to Nature Centers, Museums, Schools, Local Governments, and nonprofits. Two grant writing workshops are scheduled, one in Stamford, CT on September 10 and the other in Stony Brook on September 11. The proposal application can be downloaded from the web site www.epa.gov/region01/eco/lis or by contacting Kimberly Zimmer (631) 632-9216.

LIS Lobster Updates

www.seagrantsunysb.edu/lilobsters/lilobsters.htm

Calendar of Events

August

27 through 29 Marine Protected Areas: Design and Implementation for Conservation and Fisheries Restoration Symposium at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. Visit www.whoi.edu/institutes/oli/mpas

September

10 LISS Small Grants Grant Writing Workshop in Stamford, CT, from 7-9 pm. Contact Kimberly Zimmer at (631) 632-9216.

11 LISS Small Grants Grant Writing Workshop in Stony Brook, NY, from 7-9 pm. Contact Kimberly Zimmer at (631) 632-9216.

13 LISS CAC meeting at Pfizer in Manhattan. Call Joe Salata at (203)977-1541 for more information.

13 and 14 Nonpoint Source Technology Transfer Workshop at West Point's Hotel Thayer. For more information, visit www.neiwpcc.org/events.html

15 and 16 International Beach Cleanup. New York contact (718)471-2166. Connecticut contact (860)405-9141.

28 Postmarked deadline for LISS Small Grants Proposals. Hand deliver deadline is 4pm to the New York Sea Grant Office.

28 and 29 National Estuaries Day. Visit www.estuaries.gov for more information.

October

2 and 3 New York State Waterfront ReDiscovery Conference Quality Coasts, Quality Communities QC2. For more information, visit www.dos.state.ny.us

17 Long Island Sound Watershed Alliance meeting at SoundWaters in Stamford. Call Robin Kriesberg at 888 SAVE LIS for information and directions.

18 LISS Management Committee meeting at Stamford Government Center in CT. Call Joe Salata at (203)977-1541 for more information.

25 and 26 Estuary Volunteer Monitoring Conference, Groton, CT. Call Mark Tedesco for more information (203) 977-1541.

UPDATE

Long Island Sound Study
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